

# VICTORIAN DESALINATION PROJECT

## FACT SHEET

**WATER NOW  
AND FOR THE FUTURE.  
FOR SURE.**

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Who is AquaSure?

The Victorian State Government is developing the project in partnership with a private company.

AquaSure has been contracted to finance, design, build, operate and maintain the desalination plant.

However, Victoria's new desalination plant will at all times be publicly owned.

#### The water

##### Why do we need a desalination plant?

As of Thursday 7th January, Melbourne's water storages were at 37.4% capacity.

The major benefit of desalination is that it can continue to deliver high quality drinking water even if there is no rain.

Bass Strait will become Melbourne's biggest water catchment, which has the added advantage of making our overall supply more diverse and less vulnerable to interruption.

##### Who will get the desalinated water?

A 84-kilometre water transfer pipeline will carry the water from Wonthaggi to Cranbourne where it will connect to an existing transfer main to Cardinia Reservoir.

Seven water delivery points will be constructed along the pipeline, capable of supplying water to Melbourne, South Gippsland and Western Port towns.

The new connection points will allow provision of desalinated water, or if the plant was not running, rainwater from Cardinia Reservoir, to flow to customers of South East Water, South Gippsland Water and Westernport Water.

#### The desalination plant

##### What will the desalination plant look like?

In response to community concerns, the plant will be barely visible from any public viewing point.

The desalination facilities will comprise 29 buildings that take up just 38 hectares of the total site.

The remaining 225 hectares will become a coastal park, home to more than 3.5 million trees and shrubs, wetlands, woodlands, constructed dunes and new paths for local cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders.



### How do you get the salt out of the seawater?

Desalination is the process of removing dissolved salts from a saline water source.

Various methods can be used to desalinate seawater; reverse osmosis technology will be used at the Wonthaggi desalination plant.

Reverse osmosis plants use pressure to force seawater through membranes that are so fine, they can separate salt and water molecules.

### Are there other desalination plants in Australia?

Six major population centres in Australia either have, or are developing, desalination plants as part of their water supply solution.

These centres include: Sydney (2 plants), Perth (2 plants), Brisbane, Gold Coast and Adelaide.

### Environment

#### How are environmental impacts being managed?

An Environmental Management Plan has been developed for the project.

It describes the strict environmental safeguards that will be in place during construction and is the blueprint for how we manage to respond to environmental issues across all areas of the project.

You can download a copy of the EMP from our website or you can request a copy on DVD by calling 1800 811 214.

#### Will penguins get sucked into the intake?

The design of the marine intake structures will guard against any impact on the marine environment.

Seawater will be drawn in at very low speeds – even small fish will be able to swim against the intake current – and a protective grill will ensure that larger marine life can't swim into the structure.

#### Will you be closing Williamsons Beach?

Williamsons Beach will not be closed during construction. It will remain open and available for public enjoyment.

An 'exclusion zone' will apply around offshore floating equipment, simply to protect the safety of the marine crew and members of the public out on the water.

#### How much power will the plant use?

The desalination plant will use approximately 90 megawatts of electricity from the Victorian energy grid, which will be offset through the purchase of renewable energy credits sourced through AGL.

### Employment

#### How do I get a job on the project?

AquaSure's construction contractor, Thiess Degrémont, is now recruiting enthusiastic and motivated people.

All jobs are advertised on the AquaSure website and applications must be submitted online.

#### How many workers will there be?

It's estimated that around 1700 workers will be needed – 1200 for the plant site and around 500 for the pipe and power alignment.

#### Where will the workers live?

A 'Housing Accord' has been developed cooperatively by Bass Coast Shire Council, Thiess Degrémont and local real estate agents.

The Accord aims to minimise impacts on the long-term local rental supply and tourism markets by tapping into a new source of accommodation – holiday homes that are not normally available for rent.

Bass Coast Shire Council surveyed non-resident ratepayers within a 20km radius of the plant site, to gauge interest in making holiday homes available for rental. Over 500 responses were received.

An exclusive website has been developed and is the only accommodation website that Thiess Degrémont promotes to its workers.